

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

Conditional access methods and apparatus are provided for use with digital television receivers and other digital broadband receivers. The methods and apparatus are capable of handling several different digital signal transmission protocols in an automatic and flexible manner. An input unit is provided for analyzing and tagging incoming data bytes so that further processing operations are less dependent on the transmission format being received. A cipher handling unit is provided for adapting in real time the scrambling and descrambling performances to match the requirements of the transmission network and the receiving apparatus. A filtering mechanism is provided for filtering and handling multiple asynchronous data streams in a parallel manner.